Labour Market and Skilled Workers

What can you earn in Germany? Which deductions are taken from your salary, and how high is the cost of living? Here you will find an overview of salaries, working conditions, taxes, social security, and everyday expenses.

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Demand for skilled workers in Germany: the best opportunities to enter the labour market

Demand for skilled workers in Germany: the best opportunities to enter the labour market Germany is looking for skilled workers, but demand is not the same everywhere. Your chances vary depending on the sector and the region: you are currently in particularly high demand in technical professions as well as in health and care.

Demand for skilled workers at all qualification levels

The **demand for skilled workers** extends across all qualification levels and affects various sectors. The most severe shortages continue to be in nursing and healthcare professions. Skilled workers are also lacking in construction and skilled trades. Cooks, professional drivers, and childcare workers are also in demand (source: Federal Employment Agency, as of 2 September 2026). If you have completed vocational training, **further training**, or an **academic degree**, you have good chances on the German labour market.

Vocational training in Germany as a career start

Germany is known for its **dual vocational training system**: theory at a **vocational school** and practice in a company. Because many companies are looking for new talent, tens of thousands of training places remain unfilled every year. In 2025, there were around 54,000 (source: Federal Employment Agency, as of 30 October 2025). This creates a good opportunity: people from non-EU countries can also start vocational training in Germany under certain conditions and use it as the beginning of their career. EU citizens already have free access to the training market.

Economic hubs and career opportunities

Economic hubs and hidden champions

Depending on your sector and interests, Germany offers a wide range of **different regions**. Berlin is the centre of the start-up and digital scene, with a broad mix of industries. Munich stands out for its automotive industry, insurance sector and technology companies and is one of Germany's strongest economic cities. Frankfurt am Main is an international financial centre, home to the European Central Bank and numerous banks. Hamburg thrives on trade, logistics and media, and is strongly connected internationally thanks to its port.

Germany is also known for its "hidden champions" – small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that are often world market leaders in a specific niche. They tend to be highly technical and technology-focused, family-run, and often based not in large cities but in rural regions and smaller towns across Germany.

University locations and technology hubs

Smaller **university** and technology hubs are also in demand: with RWTH Aachen University (Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule), Aachen is one of the leading locations for engineering and technology. With the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) and thousands of IT companies, Karlsruhe is one of Europe's leading regions for information and communication technology. If you are specifically looking for a way in,

you will find a suitable region with good infrastructure and an international environment, depending on your qualification and sector.

Germany as a research location

Germany is also attractive for **science**: many international researchers work at German research institutions, particularly in the **STEM** fields of mathematics, computer science, natural sciences and technology.

Salary and income

Germany is one of the countries with low unemployment: the unemployment rate has hovered in the low single figures in recent years. The German labour market is stable and offers good job prospects.

What can you earn in Germany?

Your net income depends on the sector, your qualification and your tax bracket. A good first overview is provided by the **Entgeltatlas** (salary atlas) of the Federal Employment Agency. It shows average earning potential for numerous professions (available in German).

Gross is not the same as net

Taxes and social security contributions are deducted from your salary. In return, you receive a great deal: health insurance is already included in these contributions. Pension, long-term care and unemployment insurance are automatically covered as well.

Working hours, paid holiday entitlement and work-life balance

In Germany, many sectors and professions are governed by **collective agreements**. This means that trade unions and employers negotiate working hours and pay together in collective agreements, giving you planning security. But even outside collective agreements, many employers offer fair working hours and a good work-life balance. As a full-time employee in Germany, you work an average of 39.9 hours per week (source: Federal Statistical Office, as of 27 May 2026). By law, you are entitled to at least 20 days of holiday per year with a five-day working week. However, many employers grant up to 30 days of paid holiday – more than you may be used to in many other countries.

Information on the web

Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Employment of foreigners in Germany

Federal Ministry of the Interior

Brochure Welcome to Germany - Information for Immigrants

Federal Ministry of Finance

Information about the rights of citizens of the EU and the European Economic Area on portable social contributions

European Commission

The European Commission´s official currency converter

International Organization for Migration | IOM, UN Migration

Resources for Navigating Life in Germany: Workbook & Digital Companion App

German Pension Insurance

Work and pension in Germany and in non-contracting states

Top-Level Association of Statutory Health Insurance Providers

List of all statutory health insurance providers

ELSTER

The electronic income tax return

Handbook Germany

Information and tips on tax returns

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